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1522-71

11 May 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Director-Comptroller

SUBJECT: Summary Press Reaction to the Address "Global Intelligence and the Democratic Society" given by the Honorable Richard Helms on April 14, 1971, to the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

The following summary is based on a review of more than 60 newspapers and periodicals from all parts of the country and 40 transcripts from radio and TV broadcasts on all major networks.

That U. S. intelligence would have a major role in any strategic arms limitation agreement because such an agreement would be unthinkable without means for monitoring Soviet compliance was the theme most frequently treated. Nearly half included this, generally in a favorable manner.

That there was no easy answer to objections by those who consider intelligence work incompatible with democratic principles and the nation must to a degree take it on faith that we, too, are honorable men got wide play. There was some criticism of the call to take "it on faith" but most accepted it as intrinsic to a secret service. A ST. LOUIS POST DISPATCH editorial, however, was singularly harsh in its criticism on this point and called for additional Congressional overview of CIA. About half the outlets referring to this theme included the statement that elected officials check on the Agency extensively and continuously. A few chose to describe it as a vigorous denial of CIA's alleged role as "an invisible government".

The theme that CIA has no police powers and does not target on Americans was the third most frequently cited. Some stories tied this denial to the current clamor over charges of Army and FBI spying on civilians. None disputed the denial and a few took the occasion to contrast CIA favorably with the other two services.

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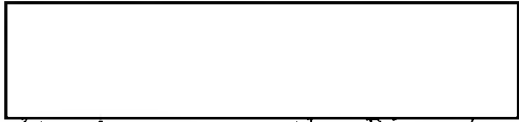
The disclosure that well-placed and courageous Russians supplied valuable information on Soviet missile systems during the '62 Cuban crisis was prominently played by many of the 30 outlets which referred to it. A few interpreted remarks made after the address to indicate some of these Russians were still active and could help check on Soviet compliance with a SALT agreement.

The statement that CIA is not involved in drug traffic and does not engage in policy making drew the attention of 15 outlets but aroused little comment.

A few editorials made the point that the growing criticism of CIA has not stemmed from distaste of gathering of intelligence in peace time but from covert actions in the military, political and cultural fields overseas.


In general the most favorable comment came from the southeastern section of the country. The most irresponsible editorial appeared in NEWSDAY (Garden City, N.Y.). It referred to Green Berets' Marasco's claim that CIA ordered him to kill his Vietnam agent as though it were a hard fact and reason to challenge the Director for saying "take it on faith that we, too, are honorable men".

Two East European stations briefly reported the fact that the Director made a speech, but we have seen nothing else.


Deputy Assistant to the Director

25X1

APPROVED:


Assistant to the Director

cc: DDI

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SUBJECT: (Optional)

FROM:

Executive Director-Comptroller

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE

14 May 1971

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

OFFICER'S
INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

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I thought you would be interested in the attached summary press reaction to the Director's speech to the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

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L. K. White

Executive Director-Comptroller

Distribution:

All Morning Meeting Participants

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